



Nashville Clean Water Project

MAY 3RD, 2008 ! KEEP IT CLEAN

PERCY PRIEST LAKE

Volunteers target 20 tons of trash at Percy Priest Lake

Kathy Mattea, Bridgestone Americas and Waste Management among key supporters of Nashville Clean Water Project's first clean on May 3

(Nashville, TN) In what organizers have planned as the largest water cleanup in Nashville history, hundreds of volunteers will converge on Percy Priest Lake on Saturday, May 3 to reclaim a portion of the estimated 200 tons of man-made waste left by lake visitors over the years.

"Percy Priest Lake's islands and shoreline accumulate tons of human-imposed debris every season," said Laurel Creech, director of Nashville's outdoor adventure club Team Green, one of four event organizers. "The Nashville Clean Water Project is dedicated to fixing this problem."

Volunteers will converge on the lake next Saturday, May 3 via event access points at Nashville Shores. Anyone interested in volunteering are asked to register for free at www.cleanPercyPriest.org. Volunteers can choose a size for their event T-shirt, choose lunch options, and reserve a ticket for the free benefit show Grammy-winning recording artist Kathy Mattea is playing for all participants. The cleanup event will take place from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimates Percy Priest's 24 islands and 213 miles of shoreline are polluted with at least 200 tons of trash. An estimated one hundred times more has fallen to the bottom of the lake since it was created in 1968.

These metals and plastics leak chemicals into the water and threaten the habitat for aquatic species and birds in Tennessee and beyond – it is conceivable that Percy Priest trash could flow all the way to the Gulf of Mexico and into the Dead Zone, said Mekayle Houghton, another co-organizer.

"Cleaner islands and shoreline improve habitat and water quality," said Houghton, director of Project Blue Streams, a program of the non-profit Cumberland River Compact. "Our work will also reduce mosquito breeding and populations of scavenger species – like crows, squirrels, pigeons or rats – ultimately providing enjoyable recreation for everyone."

News media covered this issue in 2007's high season but neither a solution nor cleanup had been organized. So Creech and her environmental friends designed the cleanup for springtime.

“We knew Spring was our critical impact season,” said Thien, who has contributed some of his company’s PR resources at thinkMEDIA to the cause. “If we can create awareness about the problem, then we’re more likely to influence the behaviors. We’d rather that, than have to come out each season to clean other people’s trash.”

That trash, organizers say, includes blatant disposal of man-made items such as beer and soda cans, barbeque grills, styrofoam meat and poultry packaging, plastic, tires, shoes, clothes, boat parts, fishing and tackle supplies, inner tubes, cigarette butts.

“Styrofoam takes about one million years to decompose,” said Tim Bent, VP of environmental affairs for Bridgestone Americas, which was named Industrial Conservationist of the Year by the Tennessee Wildlife Federation. “Cigarette butts, bottles, and cans, it all has a dramatic effect on our water. We’re working to cure Percy Priest of some serious ills.

“We couldn’t have asked for a better launch event for the Nashville Clean Water Project,” said event co-chair Daniel Strobel, Director of Marketing at Nashville Shores. “Everyone has been extremely supportive of this important cause.”

So supportive, Strobel said, that even Grammy winning recording artist Kathy Mattea called to offer support once she heard about the effort. Organizers jumped at the chance for star support; Mattea will play free concert that day for all volunteers as a “thank you” for getting involved.

Major partners of the Nashville Clean Water Project include Team Green, Bridgestone Americas, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Cumberland River Compact, thinkMEDIA, Nashville Shores, Elm Hill Marina and Kathy Mattea. Other supporters include Nashville Shores, Elm Hill Marina, Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association, Metro Beautification, Metro Public Works, Metro Water, Artistic Flow, Cool People Cares and local marinas.

If you go:

The Nashville Clean Water Project’s main staging area is Nashville Shores, 4001 Bell Road, Hermitage, TN, 37076. The effort welcomes volunteers of all ages. Those aged 16 and younger will be stationed in our Bridgestone Family Recycling Center at Nashville Shores to separate plastics, metals, paper and other materials into bins for recycling. Paddlers should also arrive to Nashville Shores’ main entrance with kayaks and canoes, however, volunteer boats should report to the Old Hickory Boat Ramp, at the end of Old Hickory Blvd., ¼ mile east of Nashville Shores.

Registration: For a well organized event, participants are asked to register at www.cleanPercyPriest.org

Donations

Because NCWP is a volunteer effort, donations of any size are appreciated. Your gifts will help pay costs from this event and seed our continued work. Donations can be sent to Nashville Clean Water Project, c/o the Cumberland River Compact [501(c)(3)], P.O. Box 41721, Nashville, TN 37204.